

The Value of Fitness Assessments

Question:

Of the numerous ways to assess your fitness level, which are valuable in designing a fitness program?

Categories of Assessments

Body Composition

Methods: Skinfold, BIA, Underwater Weighing, DEXA

Goal: Determine percentage of body that is fat

Use: Baseline for normative data and future comparison

Cardiorespiratory

Method: Resting Heart Rate, Blood Pressure

Goal: Determine resting stress of cardiorespiratory system

Use: Can provide indication of excessive stress – need to make changes

Method: Heart Rate Response: Maximal, Submaximal

Goal: Determine cardiorespiratory response to work load

Use: Baseline for normative data and future comparison
Maximal, though rare, can be used for programming

Flexibility

Methods: Sit and Reach, Passive Range of Motion, Active Range of Motion

Goal: Determine ability of muscle to move through range of motion

Use: Can indicate areas that need to be stretched
Active range testing can also indicate weakness

Strength

Methods: 1 rep max

Goal: Determining starting weights

Use: Provide baseline for future comparison

Methods: reps /minute

Goal: Find imbalances between right and left sides

Use: Provide baseline and compare right to left side strengths

Lung Capacity

Methods: Spirometer

Goal: Determine volume of air that lungs can expel

Use: Baseline for normative and future comparison

Anthropometrics

Methods: Girth

Goal: Determine circumference of body part being measured

Use: Find imbalances and a baseline for normative data and future comparison

Methods: Bone Calipers
Goal: Measure dimension of bone
Use: Compare against normative data

Posture

Methods: Posture Grid, St. John Neuromuscular Approach, Symmetry Analysis
Goal: Find postural distortions
Use: Indicates areas of weakness, tightness and body adaptations

Biomechanics

Methods: Gait, Standing Spinal Flexion, any controlled movement observation
Goal: Determine how the body moves and the position of the joints
Use: Indicates areas of weakness and stress to joints

It is important to understand the purpose of specific fitness assessments, how the assessment should be done, and what you can realistically expect to do with the information generated by the test.

A typical fitness assessment usually consists of several components: body composition, cardiorespiratory, flexibility, strength, lung capacity, anthropometrics, and a health history. An assessment at EQUIVITA will also include a close look at posture and biomechanics.